

## PARADOX AS TEXTURE: AFTER DECIDING AGAINST COLLAGE

by Jim Leftwich

Collage as form is metaphor. Collage does not exist as an object to be encountered in the present. The birthmark of collage is absence, its fingerprint is desire. Collage is time without a center, the site of absence. To make collage is to enter the mirror. Source text is signification seen as chthonic spirit, and to enter into its revisioning is to dissolve in the play of rapture.

To make collage is to join with the tradition of ecstasy, the shaman flying on his borrowed fractal drum. Collage is displacement of body; it is sex. The collage-artist annihilates self in order to liberate ego. Collage dismantles the myth of verticality, deflates hierarchy, flattens the upward spiral, proposes sacred play along the horizontal axis of the holy soil.

Source text is the garden of experience, where innocence is playfully sought through sexual disintegration.

Collage expects nothing; therefore it has no identity. Collage is a roadsign that points in the wrong direction, towards the absence of a path, the unraveling threads of present texture, where it presents itself as something else, as everything that it is not. Collage is other presented as self, difference proposed as identity. Collage promotes its existence by insisting on its nothingness.

Collage exiles time from the present. Time exists in collage as a refugee from the unknown. The reader moves through collage as an alien traversing impossible terrain: there never was a world like this, and there never will be. Collage violates all civilized arrangements of human interaction.

Collage is the denial of co-operation, the refusal of society, the anarchy of violence and desire.

Collage is not intended as democracy. It is closer in intent to monarchy, or theocracy. The collage artist uses the labor of others to facilitate his own work. Collage is free enterprise, capitalism. It is more like murder than it is like theft. It isn't so much like rape as it is like chemical warfare. Collage secretly penetrates the body of another's work, the lethal viral infection by another mind.

Collage enters text like a team of nanotech machines, to dismantle and subdue, to redirect. Collage voids the social contract between writer and reader.

Collage reinvents the relationship between sender and receiver, erases the earlier attempt at communication, and redefines the dimension of power on the terms of the collage-artist. The asymmetry of the writer/reader relationship is reversed -- the writer is silenced; the collage-artist will do the talking. In collage, an actual response, other than the negative reactions of shutting the book or consciously rejecting its thesis, becomes

possible; the collage artist re-writes the book. Since the process of consuming information is an act of submission, the collage artist responds by refusing to consume the information on the terms of the text. Collage recognizes resistance and annihilation as alternatives to submission. If the writer insists that to have read his words is to have had his thoughts, thoughts which are not one's own, then the collage-artist insists on destroying the object of his oppression, and in creating out of the debris a new work which is his own, the tools of the oppressor, his words, are stolen and utilized towards different ends. Collage, having overthrown the tyrant, invites a new kind of participation in the text.

Collage posits anarchy as the fundamental mode of interaction between reader and writer. The asymmetry of the power relationship is redefined at the outset, is reversed, with the collage-artist inviting the reader to participate as an empowered equal. Collage refuses copyright, denies the idea of intellectual property, insists on openness. Collage is revolution; it begins with an act of violence.

Collage is collaboration.

Text is a template and a score. The collage-artist enters into a liaison with the text, with a multitude of texts, facilitates communication between units of the multitude, acts as the conduit for a sexual transgression of the boundaries between texts, redistributes voice, allowing the final silence of the text to become the initial voice of the collage. Collage is naked passion, but more conjugal than illicit. Collage is form, not metaphysics, and as such is nothing more than the extension of content.

Collage proposes that the recognition of a template is a transformative experience, that improvising from a score is a form of liberation. Collage torques inert text into rotation with other texts, so that point of view, stand point, site of identity for reader and writer emerge like bubbles in a boiling pot. Collage is the chaos of human potential at play in the textual record left by a congress of mind.

Collage finds communication at the center of a sieve.

Communication is the evidence of our isolation.

Dialogue is always between the alien and the exile. Transduction as collage:

Discourse is singular. towards an anti-philosophy of mis-reading.

Collage is a burial rite celebrated over the ashes of identity. History is the silence of choice. Memory is the death-mask of choice.

Identity is the serpent, the serpent's slough, a chameleon, the

failure of collage and of memory, an erasure  
of history.

The aphorism retreats to its origin at the horizon. The aphorism locates its horizon in the past. The aphorism is a recipe for imprisonment by memory. Memory locates will at the edge of a grave, its death a singular noun, history.

History is the illusion of continuity in a fiction of identity.

Words silence the singular. Collage is non-linear aphorism, the curved horizon re-imagined as forthcoming. Collage is a collaboration between silence and desire.

Deliberate mis-reading is a form of improvisation and is always quasi-intentional. Improvisation is the will to khawatir, the desire to choose involuntary thoughts. Collage is collective improvisation, the deliberate over-extension of openness, inclusion of a range larger than the form is designed to fit.

Recombination, or distillation, works like a collage of omission, and is autoerotic, text manipulated to transform during play with(in) itself. At the same time, it is a collective improvisation, a non-traditional score re-interpreted against its author's intentions to perform as an ensemble freed of its intrinsic organizational principles.

It is the jazz standard for solo piano revisioned as a collective improvisation for double quartet. A recombinative distillation treats the degrees of freedom revealed in reading the turbulence of a text as if it is their unveiling that is the desired result of reading, as if the reader's awareness of this stretched range of possibilities, the reader ranging through this field, that actuality, activity, was the attainment to be gained through engaging a text -- not as if this encounter was a tool to then be used towards some more pragmatic action, towards a state-space-model of self and the prediction of its patterned unfolding.

This is how collage, recombination, distillation, transduction -- all quasi-intentional operations involving source text -- become divinatory practices. The reader participates in an awareness large enough to form a fractal fragment of the whole moment, so that self and situation are self-similar, and this situates identity in the site of present flux, taking shape.

In collage -- or recombination -- or distillation -- or transduction -- the writer is naked in the new text, and the original, along with its author, is violated. This is one of the hazards of embrace -- larger, of inclusion --

larger yet, of receptivity. There is no need to make this explicit in the new text; it is painfully apparent.

The situation is presented as nakedness and violation, and it is encountered as an anxious witnessing of transgression. Reading writing derived from source text, we are voyeurs witnessing a sexual crime. There is no one to report this to, and our complicity is immediate and irremediable.

Our only choice is whether or not to act. We are either silenced or converted, recruited, initiated into the alterity of the creative, where transgression is identity, and the past does not exist. There is no history at the border, no time at all at the nexus of identity and boundary.

The present erases itself with choice, future unravels in a spiral back towards the absent site of self. We are left with the rasp of individual expressivity which is emergent from a primal template that is known through receptivity. Nakedness replaces number, will is reduced to the electrical surge of anxiety, choice operates in the enormous chaos of turbulent causation, self insists on its identity until absence is its proof.

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